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Merits and Demerits of Kantian Ethics versus Utilitarianism The two moral theories, Kant's Categorical Imperatives and Utilitarianism, still dominate most standard philosophical discussions even today. Kantian ethics dwell on the individual, noting that every human being has an intrinsic worth. Therefore, an individual should be treated as an end, and not a mere means. Kantian ethics advocate for a rule-governed morality. On the other hand, according to Roderick (part 4), utilitarianism is based on social hedonism. It notes that people should always act to ensure maximum happiness to the greatest number. Therefore, while Kantian ethics are based on an individual, utilitarianism is based on the greater social setting. Both theories have their merits and demerits.

According to Roderick (part 5), Kantian ethics are an empty content. This is because it is dependent on what an individual is willing to will. Utilitarianism too has a problem. The theory seems to infringe on our sense of justice. Also, the two theories seem to ignore so many things in our lives including family, friends, special relations, and other relations that exist. The strong point of Kantian ethics is that they are based on fairness. For example, if executions are to be screened on television, then this might bring greater happiness since it will reduce crime. But, it is not fair to the individual or the individual's family. Therefore, while Kantian ethics capture fairness, utilitarianism captures real decision making and content. This is because most of our decisions are based on bringing happiness, and hence this makes the theory of utilitarianism more practical and applicable during our everyday lives.

Works Cited

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Human Values, 1990. Web. 27 November 2012. <http://rickroderick.org/103-kant-and-the-path-to-enlightenment-1990/>